



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Director of Health Services

At its meeting held May 31, 2005, the Board took the following action:

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Supervisor Antonovich made the following statement:

“The Department of Health Services reported that hospital acquired infections continued to increase in Los Angeles County in 2004. There were 2 outbreaks reported in County hospitals and 24 reported in private hospitals in 2002, in comparison to 2 outbreaks reported in County hospitals and 29 outbreaks reported in private hospitals in 2004, an increase of 16 percent. Yet, the Department does not conduct random surprise inspections to ensure that hospitals are reporting infections nor does it inform the public routinely about the rate of hospital acquired infections at a particular hospital.

“This contradicts commitments made to this Board by the Director of Health Services, Dr. Thomas L. Garthwaite in July of 2002. At that time, Dr. Garthwaite committed to aggressively pursue improved infection control practices in meeting his responsibilities as a regulator of private and public hospitals. Dr. Garthwaite assured this Board that routine surprise inspections would begin within 90 days. He made numerous statements about the need for transparency and the value in making this information available to the public so that they could make informed health care decisions. Dr. Garthwaite also stated that he needed additional staff to perform this function. Since that time, the unit responsible within the Health Department for tracking hospital acquired infections has grown from 2.5 full-time employees to 9 employees.

“In addition, the private hospital industry has gone on record as supporting disclosure of this information but they want a process that is fair and accurate.”

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Therefore, on motion of Supervisor Antonovich, seconded by Supervisor Burke, unanimously carried (Supervisor Yaroslavsky being absent), the Director of Health Services was directed to report back to the Board within 30 days with a comprehensive plan developed in cooperation with private hospitals, to begin making public the rate of hospital infections by hospital, outbreak information by hospital, and a plan to implement surprise random inspections to ensure compliance.

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